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ABSTRACT

This newsletter consists of two parts, the first dealing with issues common to the nation members of the Council of Europe, and the second consisting of reports from eleven countries. The first section contains a brief resume of a conference of ministers of education from British Commonwealth countries and a summary of an American study of individualization of instruction. (A French report on a conference of African educators is also included.) English language articles from individual countries include recommendations concerning Open Universities in Finland and the Netherlands; and reform of higher education in Sweden. Fiscal problems of education are reported from Ireland, The Netherlands, and the Federal Republic of Germany. Other topics discussed are the five-day school week (Austria), counseling of students (Denmark), Communist students (Greece), teacher training (Sweden and the United Kingdom), and the place of modern languages in the curriculum (United Kingdom). (SD)

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COMMONWEALTH EDUCATION CONFERENCE

The Commonwealth education ministers met in Accra in mid March for the seventh Commonwealth education conference. The theme of this year's conference - they happen every three years - was the economics of education, and the topic was broken up into three sections - education policy and the national budget, cost effectiveness in providing education, and the financing of education.

Britain is not alone in feeling particularly broke at present. With the exception of Nigeria and Trinidad, who have oil, everyone is in the same boat. Australia, for example, one of the last of the big spenders, is now faced with a new government and a programme of cuts in public spending.

While such conferences are certainly designed to encourage the rich to help the poor, there has been in recent years a growing willingness, to act as equal colleagues in adversity, pooling useful ideas. For example, considerable interest is expected in the work which Singapore, Malta and Hongkong have been doing in technician education.

This sort of more equal co-operation was something the Commonwealth Secretariat in London had been assiduously fostering. They did not expect the issue of fees for overseas students in Britain to be a flash point. That subject has preoccupied the education liaison committee which meets regularly in London because that is manned by diplomats with responsibility for students in this country.

But Britain was not the only country to have raised fees and Commonwealth students by no means look exclusively to Britain for university education these days. The secretariat line has been to encourage Commonwealth regionalism with, for example, Southern African countries sending their students to Lusaka, those in South-East Asia concentrating on say, Kuala Lumpur. There was a feeling that sending the best and brightest to study in Europe may not really be in the sending countries' best interest.

The Times Education Supplement, 11/III/1977

EUDISED descriptors : minister of education ; economics of education ; financing ; fees ; international cooperation.

CONFERENCE DES MINISTRES DE L'EDUCATION DES PAYS D'EXPRESSION FRANCAISE

A la mi-mars s'est tenue à Bruxelles la Conférence des Ministres de l'Education de 24 pays francophones : les 18 pays d'Afrique Noire francophone plus Madagascar et l'Île Maurice, qui coopèrent au sein du Conseil africain et malgache de l'enseignement supérieur (C.A.M.E.S.), ainsi que Haïti, la Belgique, la France et le Canada-Québec. Cette Conférence se réunit d'habitude alternativement dans un pays africain et à Paris. C'est la première fois qu'elle a modifié cette tradition en siégeant à Bruxelles sous la présidence de M. Antoine HUMBLET, Ministre belge de l'Education Nationale et de la Culture française, qui assumait depuis l'année dernière la vice-présidence de la conférence.

La tâche de la Conférence est d'élaborer des recommandations-cadres qui n'ont pas de caractère contraignant et qui permettent à chaque pays de les adopter selon ses préoccupations. La pérennité de l'action de la Conférence est assurée par trois organismes permanents : un secrétariat technique ayant son siège à Dakar, le C.A.M.E.S. siégeant en

Haute-Volta et l'Association universitaire pour le développement de l'enseignement et de la culture en Afrique et à Madagascar (AUDECAM) qui siège à Paris.

Le thème de la Conférence de Bruxelles était "L'encadrement pédagogique des maîtres des premier et second cycles". Ce thème avait été choisi lors de la précédente réunion, tenue en février 1976 au Tchad. La raison de ce choix était l'importance croissante de la formation continue des maîtres. Le rôle des enseignants est primordial en Afrique. A ce propos, le ministre tchadien disait à Bruxelles : "La révolution en Afrique a été faite par les instituteurs".

Durant la Conférence les participants ont étudié comment renforcer la mobilité des enseignants africains dans le cadre d'une formation continue. Cela impliquait d'abord une solution au problème de l'homologation des diplômes de formation d'enseignants d'un Etat africain par rapport à un autre. Cela impliquait aussi la mise au point d'un mécanisme d'équivalence de l'enseignement dans les écoles normales et les universités. Il fut convenu de mettre en chantier la constitution de jurys de concours interafricains chargés de résoudre ces deux problèmes. Ceux-ci réglés, la Conférence envisage la création d'une école normale interafricaine qui servira de projet-pilote ; sur la base des expériences acquises, d'autres pourront ensuite être créées.

Cette politique exigera évidemment une certaine rationalisation des programmes et du matériel didactique. La plupart des participants ont mis l'accent sur la nécessité que ce matériel soit africain, efficace et d'une utilisation aisée. Les pays d'Afrique souhaitent préserver dans l'enseignement les caractères propres à chacun d'eux et acquérir ainsi la pleine indépendance de leur enseignement, avec les moyens limités qui sont les leurs. La coordination et la rationalisation des programmes et du matériel didactique fera l'objet de la prochaine conférence.

Les délégués ont également examiné le système d'enseignement par video-cassettes télévisées mis au point par la Côte d'Ivoire et dont les techniciens sont formés à Bruxelles. Plusieurs ministres ont visité des écoles bruxelloises d'enseignement préscolaire et primaire.

La contribution qu'apportent la Belgique et la France au développement de l'éducation en Afrique francophone est beaucoup appréciée. La Belgique à elle seule envoie actuellement 260 enseignants en Afrique. Ils assurent la formation d'instituteurs, d'enseignants techniques ou para-médicaux. Ces enseignants sont soutenus par l'Association pour la promotion des enseignants d'expression française à l'étranger, mais leur travail sur le terrain dépend uniquement du contrat que l'enseignant signe avec l'Etat d'accueil. La Belgique s'est ainsi placée dans le sillage d'une conception qui se résume dans cette demande : "Ne nous envoyez pas un professeur pour enseigner à nos élèves, mais des enseignants pour former nos professeurs".

Le Soir, 13/14, 18, 20/21/III/1977; B.M.

Descripteurs EUDISED : ministre de l'éducation ; coopération internationale ; enseignant ; formation des enseignants ; diplôme ; moyens d'enseignement ; moyen audiovisuel ; Afrique.

PROGRESSIVE METHODS FAILING TO IMPROVE STANDARDS ?

A massive government study of many of the innovations introduced into American schools over the past 20 years - including team teaching, open classrooms, movable time-tables, teacher aides and individualized instruction - has found that they make very little difference to pupils' achievement.

This startling conclusion has taken educationists aback. Some are already expressing fears that it will undermine progressive education, fuel back-to-basics movements and support the contention of sociologists such as Christopher JENCKS that differences between schools have little effect on pupils when they leave.

The study, one of the most ambitious ever undertaken, cost \$ 1.8m and looked at the performance of 30,000 pupils in 80 representative schools.

It found that pupils in schools with a more moderate emphasis on innovation and individualization showed the greatest improvement in reading and mathematics tests. It did make a difference to reading scores if more time was spent on reading and language skills in the first years of school, the study said. But it added : "The single most important and well-documented finding was the lack of either substantial or consistent association between student achievement and overall level of innovation across grades".

The report did not want its findings to be viewed as a "sweeping criticism" of new ideas and practices in teaching, but "should serve as a reminder to educators, parents and legislators that educational innovation per se will not necessarily produce dramatic effects on student achievement. Educational quality is not synonymous with innovation or individualization".

The report was commissioned by the United States Office of Education because, it said, there was a growing awareness of the lack of - and need for - evidence on whether new ideas in teaching were indeed any better than traditional approaches.

The American Institute for Research, the California organization that carried out the research, spent some time looking for innovative programmes, visiting schools, interviewing teachers and sitting in on classes. It says it was probably the first large-scale longitudinal study to associate the educational attributes underlying school programmes and the characteristics of teachers with only those individual pupils who were directly exposed to their influence. For sheer complexity of data, the study was unique. Some 3,500 individual items of data could be associated with a single pupil.

The study covered a wide array of methods intended to give pupils more individual attention. These included small-group teaching, allowing pupils to select which materials to study, intensive guidance and counselling, home visits, flexible time-tables and so on.

All this did make a difference to reading and arithmetic skills at the early stages, and increasing the amount of class time spent on language in elementary school might be a worthwhile way of improving performance. But the researchers were clearly very puzzled why more individualization made so little difference among older pupils.

They offered some possible explanations : pupils' loss of self-motivation, teachers' lack of involvement, inappropriate matches between educational approaches and pupils' needs and the insensitivity of standard measurements to new ideas and practices.

The Times Education Supplement, 14/1/1977

EUDISED descriptors : teaching method ; innovation ; achievement measurement ; assessment ; USA.

AUSTRIA : CONTROVERSY ABOUT THE FIVE-DAY SCHOOL WEEK

When introducing his programme for 1977 at a press conference in January, the Education Minister, Dr. F. SINOWATZ declared that the five-day school week, which a few years ago had only been demanded by a minority, was now being advocated by the majority of parents and teachers, the free Saturday having become the rule in administration and industry. He emphasised, however, that the introduction of the five-day school week presupposed, on the one hand, a revision of curricula and, on the other, the consensus of the major political parties.

The free Saturday exists already in the elementary and primary schools in Upper Austria, and the experience gained is generally held to be positive.

At the end of February, the Minister informed Parliament that he intended to submit an amendment to the existing school legislation, in the course of the year or in early 1978, by which the provinces would be authorised to introduce the free Saturday in elementary school from Autumn 1978. This amendment would, as all school reform legislation, need a two-thirds majority to be passed. Whether the five-day school week would be extended also to lower and upper secondary education and to vocational and technical schools, should be decided later. There would, at any rate, be no reduction of the vacations and no raising of the school-leaving age to compensate for the five-day week.

This proposal met with unexpected resistance. Mr. L. GRATZ, the mayor of Vienna, a former Education Minister and the "coming man" of the Austrian Labour Party to which also Mr. Sinowatz belongs, declared publicly that he would not propose the five-day school week to his city parliament, even if the law were enacted. Reactions among the other political parties and the various teacher and parent organisations were equally divided.

The School Reform Commission, which comprises both experts and parliamentarians, is also dealing with this matter. In March the results of two surveys were submitted to it which had been carried out first in Styria and then in all provinces of the country. In Styria 90 % of elementary teachers, but only 6.6 % of secondary teachers were in favour of the five-day school week ; parents shared this opinion (90.2 % of elementary school parents but only 14.8 % of secondary school parents being in favour). In the other survey all secondary school teachers were asked for their view : 14.4 % were in favour of the five-day week, 78.7 % were against it and 6.9 % thought it made no difference.

Confronted with such surprisingly divided opinion, both ministries, the Education Ministry which is responsible for schools, and the Higher Education Ministry took refuge in research : they published in March, in the six biggest newspapers, an appeal to researchers of all disciplines to participate in an investigation into the five-day school week. Special problems, listed as being of interest to the Ministries, comprise analyses of Austrian and foreign experience, problems of developmental and learning psychology, medical and social aspects, problems of organisation and economic aspects. Proposals for projects in these fields will be accepted by the end of April.

JBF Spectrum, 15/I; 15/III, 1/IV/1977; v.M.

EUDISED descriptors : time-table ; parental attitude ; teacher behaviour ; working conditions ; length of studies ; Austria.

DENMARK : A GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING SYSTEM FOR ALL YOUNG PEOPLE

A report containing proposals for the setting up of a guidance and counselling system for all pupils and young people not yet covered by an adequate system has been submitted to the Education Committee of parliament. The report has been elaborated by a committee consisting of representatives of various branches of the Ministries of Education and Labour. This committee was established as a result of parliamentary demand in connection with the planning of post-secondary education in 1975 and of the rising number of young people out of work.

The committee proposes that as from the beginning of the coming academic year there should be during each of the three years of upper secondary school the equivalent of one hour per class per week devoted to guidance and counselling. At present, upper secondary pupils get some 14 hours of guidance in all. Under the proposed scheme guidance may be given in groups, but pupils should also be offered individual advice. Such counselling should cover not only choice of subjects for study but also problems of an economic, social or personal nature. The committee report recommends that the same scheme be adopted in higher commercial schools. As a result of the law on the comprehensive school, which came into effect last summer, provision for counselling and guidance in this sector was strengthened, and the committee sees no reason to propose changes. As for the post-secondary sector, the committee proposes the introduction of financial guidelines to ensure that the institutions concerned reserve adequate funds for guidance and counselling, and that there be established more formal links with working life.

Those most in need of guidance and counselling, according to the report are those who enter working life directly after completion of the comprehensive school course (folkeskole), and it is proposed that the guidance service actively seeks out young people in need of advice rather than wait for them to come forward.

Implementation of the report's proposals will be hampered on account of the fact that there are not enough qualified counsellors at present available and that training facilities are limited. It is estimated that to effect the committee's recommendations would require 600 counsellors in addition to the 900 already at work. The committee suggests that their training should be of 17 weeks duration (510 hours), of which 180 hours would be common to all undergoing training. The rest of the time would be devoted to special aspects. In view of the pressing need for counsellors, two-week crash courses will be organized by some teacher training colleges.

Weekendavisen 14/I/1977 ; B.B.P., W.F.B.

EUDISED descriptors : guidance ; guidance officer ; report ; training ; Denmark.

FINLAND : REFORM OF UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION

During the course of a parliamentary debate on education in February, the government made it known that as soon as possible it would present proposals for a reform of upper secondary education. It was taken for granted in 1968 when the law concerning the generalization of the comprehensive school was voted that it would be necessary to review the upper secondary system. The Minister of Education,

Mrs. Marjatta VAAHNEN, has recognized that the time is now ripe for action, since upper secondary curricula are still largely based on the old forms of primary and lower secondary education, and since changes in labour market demands call for a reappraisal of policies concerning the upper secondary sector.

The government would like to give increased importance to vocational training so as to attract more comprehensive school leavers to this type of course and at the same time cut back on the numbers opting for an academic line of studies. In accordance with a decision taken by the government in May 1974, vocational training should be conceived in such a way as to permit competition with the traditional upper secondary school as a means of access to higher education. The government envisages a common first year programme for all students entering the "gymnasium" in future, a programme which would round off the work of the comprehensive school, and then the students would be able to opt for a traditional "gymnasium" style course or for vocational training. Likewise, students entering on vocational training would have a common initial course before specializing. "Gymnasium" and vocational studies should be held in equal esteem as regards entry to higher education.

In order to prepare the reform of upper secondary education, 14 committees were set up in 1974. In particular, they were to look into problems concerning curricula. The committees, now reaching the end of their tasks, are of the opinion that vocational training at the upper secondary level instead of consisting of the present 600-700 narrowly specialized lines of study, should be grouped into 28 basic lines which would in turn be divided into 240 special lines.

The desire of the government to give priority to vocational training has received support from all political parties. There have been some reservations and criticisms, however. The plan to cut back on "gymnasium" places had led some to fear that the "gymnasium" might disappear in sparsely populated areas. There was also opposition to the view that less weight should be given to the teaching of languages and religion in order to give more weight to the sciences. Language teachers consider that such a move would constitute a death blow to the teaching of French, German and Russian.

The Minister of Education has indicated that reform of upper secondary education will be gradual, and that she will give consideration to any further comments before presenting a bill to parliament.

Nordisk Kontakt 4/77 ; B.B.P., W.F.B.

EUDISED descriptors : upper secondary ; vocational training ; reform ; curriculum ; Finland.

FINLAND : RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AN OPEN UNIVERSITY

The creation of regional open universities, each based at one of the eight existing multi-faculty full universities, is being considered by the government, following recommendations by the Finnish Cultural Foundation. The report by a committee including university, adult education and Finnish Broadcasting Company representatives favours developing existing facilities rather than creating a new institution, which it was felt would be too expensive.

The eight new open university departments would form the nucleus of regional units covering the country, including other single-faculty universities, folk high schools, adult education institutes and

university-level summer courses. A national commission would act as co-ordinator for the eight units and maintain links with overseas open universities.

Courses and teaching would be supervised by the eight departments and their branches at adult institutes and folk high schools. The departments would also adopt curricula, choose tuition methods and materials, and approve non-university tutors. At first, tuition would be mainly direct, relying almost exclusively on university teachers, who would take on the extra instruction load as overtime. Later, however, study through correspondence courses, radio and television would dominate.

The report, which lays emphasis on developing adult rather than simply higher education favours a gradual development of open university-style teaching. The main target should be workers and housewives over 25 years of age who missed earlier chances to undertake full-time university studies (especially for geographical reasons or lack of formal qualifications) and need training or retraining in connection with work.

Courses would be based on a units/credits system, and students should be able to study for a new intermediate qualification as well as for traditional full-length degrees.

The Times Higher Education Supplement, 28/1/77;BBP;WFB

EUDISED descriptors : adult education ; higher education ; teaching aids ; distance study ; retraining ; Finland.

FRANCE : REFORME DES RYTHMES SCOLAIRES

Le problème des rythmes scolaires n'est pas nouveau. Depuis 1972 et plus récemment au cours des années 1975 et 1976, Monsieur René HABY, ministre de l'Education, a réuni des groupes de réflexion chargés de proposer des solutions concrètes pour adapter la vie scolaire aux nécessités économiques et sociales actuelles.

Le système scolaire, avec ses unités de temps bien marquées (l'heure, la journée, la semaine, l'année), crée en effet pour l'enfant un rythme de vie différent de son rythme biologique, qui peut être contraignant pour lui et entraîner une fatigue scolaire. Aussi le ministre de l'Education a-t-il lancé, début février, une concertation avec les différents partenaires sociaux (organisations syndicales et fédérations de parents d'élèves). Après avoir recueilli leur avis, il a proposé au Conseil des ministres, qui les a adoptés, les projets suivants.

Réduction de la durée des cours

Actuellement de 55 minutes, l'heure de cours sera ramenée à 50 minutes. Les dix minutes qui restent seront consacrées à la détente des enfants. On sait, en effet, depuis fort longtemps qu'au-delà d'une certaine durée l'attention des enfants baisse. Cette innovation restera expérimentale et ne s'appliquera qu'en classe de sixième (première année d'enseignement secondaire) et seulement pour les matières intellectuelles : français, mathématiques, langues vivantes, histoire et géographie et sciences expérimentales.

Organisation de la journée et de la semaine

C'est dans ce domaine que se posaient le plus de problèmes, tout d'abord parce qu'on ne peut décider du rythme de la journée que si l'on a choisi un schéma hebdomadaire clair (coupure au mercredi ou au samedi) et ensuite parce que l'unanimité des partenaires consultés est loin d'être faite sur ce dernier point.

Les propositions du ministre tiennent compte, en conséquence, des positions enregistrées au cours des différents sondages pratiqués dans l'opinion et des consultations faites auprès des partenaires sociaux. Dans cette optique, M. Haby présente deux types d'organisation que les chefs d'établissement, après concertation avec les enseignants, les élèves, les parents et les municipalités, pourront adopter en tenant compte des conditions locales.

Selon un premier schéma, les 21 heures hebdomadaires obligatoires sont réparties sur cinq jours, le samedi restant libre. Les disciplines intellectuelles sont placées le matin, ce qui est possible sans fatiguer les enfants à l'excès puisqu'elles ne représentent que 14 heures. Deux après-midi sont consacrés à l'éducation physique, à l'éducation artistique et aux travaux manuels et techniques. Les autres après-midi peuvent être occupés par des activités optionnelles complémentaires, soit à l'intérieur de l'établissement, soit à l'extérieur (pour les sports) en faisant appel au concours de personnes extérieures à l'établissement pour des activités de théâtre, ou de ciné-club par exemple. Enfin, des accords peuvent être pris avec les autorités religieuses pour l'horaire hebdomadaire d'instruction religieuse.

Le second modèle d'organisation du temps scolaire maintient les cours le samedi matin. Cette fois, les disciplines intellectuelles sont intercalées avec les disciplines artistiques et sportives du lundi au samedi. Il y a donc six matinées et quatre après-midi de travail, le mercredi et le samedi après-midi étant libres. Dans ce système, une place plus importante est laissée à la détente (à l'heure du déjeuner par exemple) et d'autre part, les parents qui travaillent bénéficient de la prise en charge de leurs enfants le samedi matin.

Organisation de l'année scolaire

La nouvelle organisation de l'année scolaire doit répondre avant tout à un souci de rééquilibrage des périodes trimestrielles de travail entrecoupées de congés plus réguliers et mieux répartis. Les résultats donnés par les expériences de découpage géographique de la France en trois zones lors des vacances d'hiver et de printemps semblent avoir été très positif. Ce système est donc conservé. D'autre part, à l'instar du second trimestre qui comporte les petites vacances de Mardi gras, les premier et troisième trimestres seront coupés par un petit congé de deux ou trois jours (à la Toussaint et à la Pentecôte, par exemple). Cependant, l'élément le plus important de ce rééquilibrage de l'année scolaire est le retour du troisième trimestre à une durée normale : les mois d'avril, mai et juin seront occupés à temps plein par l'activité scolaire. La conséquence essentielle de cet aménagement est le report des examens dans la période du 30 juin au 14 juillet. La durée des vacances d'été reste toujours de deux mois et demi à partir du 1er juillet pour ceux qui ne passent pas d'examens.

Aménagement du BEPC et du baccalauréat

Afin de ne pas demander aux enseignants une charge excessive et pour que les épreuves puissent se dérouler sans difficulté sur une période de quinze jours, une certaine simplification des examens sera opérée.

Le BEPC (brevet d'études du premier cycle) sera accordé automatiquement à la fin de la classe de troisième aux élèves admis en seconde (première année du second cycle d'enseignement secondaire). Seuls les élèves n'ayant pas atteint le niveau leur permettant de passer dans la classe supérieure auront à passer un examen.

Le baccalauréat sera désormais accordé aux candidats ayant obtenu 10 sur 20 à l'écrit. L'examen écrit comportera une épreuve supplémentaire d'histoire et de géographie, matière importante qui ne figurait jusqu'à présent que dans les épreuves de l'examen oral. Les candidats ayant obtenu à l'écrit une note se situant entre 8 et 10 auront à passer un examen oral complémentaire.

Le courrier de l'Education, 14/III/1977 ; C.P.

Descripteurs EUDISED : année scolaire ; emploi du temps ; temps d'enseignement ; vacances ; France.

FRANCE : PROJET DE REFORME DES ETUDES MEDICALES

Le rapport de la commission Fougère, chargée par le gouvernement de dresser un bilan critique de la formation des futurs médecins, a été rendu public fin mars. Les propositions avancées - notamment le renforcement de la sélection, la création d'un cycle terminal pour le généraliste, la suppression de l'internat - apparaissent comme extrêmement novatrices. Mais ces mesures provoqueront sans doute des réserves, sinon des oppositions importantes, si elles sont retenues par les ministères concernés : le ministère de la santé, le secrétariat d'Etat aux universités et également le ministère des finances dans la mesure où le coût des réformes proposées a pu être chiffré par la commission à plus de trois cent millions de francs.

Deux préoccupations essentielles ont présidé aux travaux de la commission Fougère : le renouveau de la médecine générale et la formation de spécialistes de haut niveau. Les propositions de réforme les plus importantes concernent la dernière période des études médicales, mais des aménagements substantiels pourraient, d'après ce rapport, être apportés à l'organisation des six premières années de formation des futurs praticiens.

Des stages hospitaliers plus précoces. La commission a estimé que le premier cycle des études médicales, dont la durée resterait fixée à deux ans, posait le problème de la place qui devait être accordée aux sciences fondamentales. Sans remettre en cause la nécessité d'une formation axée sur les connaissances scientifiques, ce rapport souhaite que, dès le premier cycle, les étudiants puissent se familiariser avec le malade et l'hôpital. A cet égard, l'introduction d'un premier stage de sémiologie, dès la deuxième année du premier cycle est apparue souhaitable. En ce qui concerne le second cycle des études médicales (quatre années d'études), la commission a proposé, tout d'abord, l'introduction de matières optionnelles afin d'apporter une certaine souplesse à l'enseignement théorique. Elle a recommandé, d'autre part, qu'une plus grande place soit accordée dans l'enseignement à la médecine préventive et à l'économie de la santé. Enfin, diverses suggestions ont été avancées pour l'amélioration des stages hospitaliers du deuxième cycle.

Une revalorisation de la formation du généraliste. Actuellement, le stage pratique du généraliste effectué au cours de la septième année d'études est trop court, peu formateur et mal rémunéré, estime la commission. Elle propose donc la création d'un cycle terminal propre

aux généralistes, dont la durée serait de deux ans et qui intégrerait le stage actuel. Durant dix-huit mois, le futur généraliste effectuerait des stages dans des centres hospitaliers avec des responsabilités qui sont aujourd'hui celles de l'interne et une rémunération décente. Les six autres mois de ce cycle terminal devraient être occupés par des stages extra-hospitaliers, par exemple auprès des praticiens en exercice, à la condition toutefois que le stagiaire accomplisse un certain nombre d'actes médicaux. Le cycle terminal comporterait également un enseignement théorique dont la durée annuelle n'excéderait pas cent cinquante heures. Ce cycle serait validé après un examen du dossier par le conseil de l'unité d'enseignement et de recherche.

Une filière unique pour les spécialistes. Les étudiants qui désirent se spécialiser peuvent actuellement choisir entre la voie universitaire des certificats d'études spéciales ou la voie hospitalière de l'internat. Le rapport Fougère estime que la formation dispensée dans le cadre des certificats d'études spéciales présente de nombreuses imperfections : spécialisation excessive, absence de formation à temps plein, médiocrité de l'enseignement pratique. L'internat n'est pas non plus à l'abri des critiques, en raison notamment de l'inexistence de l'enseignement théorique. De toute façon, la formation des futurs spécialistes, telle qu'elle est dispensée en France, devait être modifiée en raison de son incompatibilité avec les directives européennes entrées en vigueur à la fin de 1976, qui exigent notamment, pour ces futurs spécialistes, un enseignement à la fois théorique et pratique.

La commission Fougère propose une filière unique pour l'ensemble des spécialistes qui emprunterait pour la formation pratique le moule hospitalier des internats actuels, désormais unifiés. La formation théorique serait dispensée sous forme de séminaires, dans les unités d'enseignement et de recherche de chaque région. Un numerus clausus sera institué, permettant d'assurer un bon équilibre entre le nombre des généralistes et le nombre des spécialistes, alors qu'on assistait ces dernières années à une désaffection croissante pour la médecine générale.

Cette nouvelle filière suppose une égalité entre le nombre des postes formateurs, qui n'a jamais fait l'objet d'un recensement complet, et le nombre de médecins à former par spécialité, alors que l'on connaît dans ce domaine des variations très fortes (ainsi en pédiatrie ou en pneumologie). La commission a estimé qu'une adéquation entre les besoins et les postes disponibles était possible en retenant comme estimation pour ces prochaines années le nombre des spécialistes formés actuellement chaque année (soit environ 2000).

Un examen de classement unique. L'accès à l'un ou l'autre des cycles terminaux est ouvert aux étudiants qui ont satisfait à l'examen probatoire à la fin du deuxième cycle. La commission Fougère propose d'instituer pour tous un examen de classement auquel les étudiants pourront se présenter deux fois consécutives. Cet examen demeurerait facultatif, mais il serait de fait obligatoire pour les futurs spécialistes, étant donné le nombre limité des postes disponibles. Le rapport Fougère suggère que deux types d'épreuves portant sur le programme du deuxième cycle soient proposés aux candidats : des questions à réponses courtes et une épreuve de contraction de textes.

Le Monde, 29/III/1977 ; C.P.

Descripteurs EUDISED : médecine ; médecin ; formation ; examen ; numerus clausus ; rapport d'enquête ; France.

FRANCE : LES ETABLISSEMENTS SCOLAIRES ET LA LUTTE CONTRE LA TOXICOMANIE

Pour faire face au grave problème de la drogue, Monsieur HABY, ministre de l'Education, a décidé de lancer une vaste campagne d'information sur ce sujet, afin de provoquer chez tous les membres de la communauté scolaire une prise de conscience de la réalité des dangers de la toxicomanie et de restreindre ainsi les possibilités de conditionnement des individus. Dans une circulaire adressée fin mars aux chefs d'établissement, M. Haby définit les actions de sensibilisation des élèves et des personnels qui devront être mises en œuvre.

Selon le ministre, "il ne peut être question de se mettre un bandeau sur les yeux pour ne pas voir certaines réalités et de demeurer passif face au désarroi, voire à la détresse d'adolescents en péril". Pour lutter contre ce fléau social, l'intervention des responsables de l'éducation devra, selon M. Haby, être "à la fois discrète, ferme et accompagnée d'une information appropriée".

Cette information concernera tout d'abord les élèves. Ainsi, le programme de biologie des classes de quatrième et de troisième (deux dernières années de scolarité obligatoire) comportera, dans le cadre de la réforme du système éducatif, l'étude des méfaits de l'abus de l'alcool, du tabac et des médicaments, ainsi que le danger que présente l'usage de tous les produits psychotropes.

Une autre forme, complémentaire, de l'information des élèves sera la création de "clubs de santé". Ouverts aux élèves ainsi qu'aux personnels enseignants, d'encadrement et de service désirant s'informer sur les questions d'éducation sanitaire et d'hygiène, ces clubs de santé auront pour objet de développer chez les jeunes le sens de leurs responsabilités devant les problèmes de la vie à la lumière des dernières connaissances scientifiques. Ils pourront s'insérer dans le cadre des foyers socio-éducatifs des établissements, tout en étant animés par tel professeur, tel conseiller d'éducation, en liaison avec le médecin scolaire et le personnel infirmier de l'établissement. "Il est essentiel", estime M. Haby "que les élèves participent aux activités du club, qu'ils aient un rôle actif dans cette animation et choisissent eux-mêmes les thèmes à étudier". Le ministre de l'Education recommande, cependant, que cette information des jeunes ne soit pas "spectaculaire et tapageuse". Il met notamment en garde contre l'organisation de "journées" qui risqueraient de faire involontairement la propagande de la drogue en attirant l'attention de nombreux élèves, surtout des moins âgés, pour lesquels le problème ne se pose pas. "On préférera", conseille M. Haby, "une action continue et tenace, dont la discrétion voulue ne sera nullement synonyme d'inefficacité".

L'information s'effectuera également au niveau des chefs d'établissement et des enseignants. Ainsi, des réunions devront être organisées à leur intention dans toutes les académies en collaboration avec le conseiller médical de l'académie et en accord avec les responsables départementaux de médecine et de pharmacie, des spécialistes de la psychologie des jeunes, des responsables de la lutte contre les trafiquants de drogue. Une documentation spéciale sera diffusée et des séances d'information organisées dans les établissements à l'intention des professeurs et des autres personnels.

M. Haby admet, cependant, que l'information ne règlera pas tous les problèmes, et il invite les chefs d'établissement à exercer leur vigilance pour que soient "reconnus à des signes qui le plus souvent ne trompent pas, les élèves en difficulté". Le ministre leur demande

d'agir dans un climat de "confiance", de "discrétion", mais aussi de "lucidité" : en face d'un trafic, ils devront évidemment appliquer la loi.

Bulletin Officiel du ministère de l'Education et du Secrétariat d'Etat aux Universités, 24/III/1977; C.P.

Descripteurs EUDISED : toxicomanie ; stupéfiant ; santé ; éducation sanitaire ; France.

FRANCE : LES LANGUES VIVANTES DANS L'ENSEIGNEMENT SECONDAIRE

Officiellement, l'éventail des langues vivantes offertes au choix des élèves de l'enseignement secondaire est particulièrement large : six dès la classe de sixième (première année du premier cycle) et douze pour le baccalauréat. En fait, et ce phénomène est constant depuis une vingtaine d'années, on assiste à une "anglicisation" dans l'enseignement des langues vivantes en France. Ainsi, selon les chiffres de 1975-1976, 84 % des jeunes Français fréquentant l'école obligatoire apprennent l'anglais et, tandis que seul l'allemand résiste à cette tendance, l'espagnol et l'italien n'ont plus guère que des positions régionales et les autres langues (russe, arabe, portugais, néerlandais) sont à peine marginales.

Toujours selon les statistiques de 1975-1976, on trouve en première langue : anglais 81 % ; allemand 16 % ; espagnol 2,7 % ; italien 0,3 %. En seconde langue : allemand 36 % ; espagnol 34 % ; anglais 20 % ; italien 7,5 % ; les autres langues étant très limitées.

Le Monde de l'Education, N° 27, avril 77; C.P.

Descripteurs EUDISED : langue vivante ; langue étrangère ; première langue ; deuxième langue ; anglais ; allemand ; espagnol ; italien ; France.

FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY : INTRODUCTION OF A WEIGHTED LOTTERY SYSTEM ?

In early February the Federal Constitutional Court in a 133-page document ruled on a number of problems concerning admission to higher education which has become the most controversial issue of education policy. The growing number of rejected applicants for entry to numerous *clausus* subjects such as dentistry, medicine, pharmacy, and psychology has created widespread discontent, and the prospect that this situation, whatever measures are taken, will be aggravated by the larger student cohorts now reaching admission age has alarmed public opinion. In the absence of political consensus and satisfactory regulations the Court's pronouncement, which is binding on legislation and administration, acquires a great political weight.

The Court bases its ruling on the constitutionally guaranteed right of every citizen to choose freely his occupation and training. The same Court in 1972 had acknowledged the legality of the numerous *clausus* as a temporary measure to prevent overcrowding in universities. It now states that "the limit of what is constitutionally acceptable" has been reached : the legal equality of opportunity of each candidate is being endangered by the present regulations.

In the first part of its ruling, the Court states that the existing study places must be fully utilised. It refers to a number of judgments of the Länder courts which found that universities and colleges had made arbitrary restrictions as regards admission by universities and colleges. Furthermore, it argues that academic staff increased by 305 % from 1960 to 1974 whereas student numbers increased by only 139 %. It concludes from these and similar figures that more students can be admitted. A temporary "over-loading quota" would not be unconstitutional and would not violate the guaranteed freedom of research and teaching. The Court insists that higher education must be further expanded parallel to long-term individual demand.

In the further parts of the ruling the judges acknowledge that, since the Abitur and equivalent leaving certificates confer a valid claim to admission, any selection criteria must give a chance of admission even to candidates with poor marks. This is not the case at present. The Court therefore rules that a weighted lottery system would not be unconstitutional and deals in great detail with the various possibilities for implementing such a system in which the Abitur marks and the rank obtained by lottery would be combined. The Court advocates the introduction of this system at least as a temporary measure, until the new admission system which combines Abitur marks and tests as stipulated by the Higher Education Frame Act (see News-letter 4/76) is introduced.

In the remaining parts of the judgement the Court rules that the quota system of the Frame Act is in conformity with the Constitution. Under this system places available in numerous subjects will be shared out among the Länder from the academic year 1977/78 onwards. Two-thirds of available places will be allotted according to each Land's proportion of the total number of 18-21 year-olds in any year and one third according to its proportion of candidates applying for admission in that year. This regulation had been attacked by those Länder who have an above-average proportion of Abiturienten. The Court finally confirms that the stipulations of the Frame Act which make the general admission system applicable also to students who change their study subject or begin a second study course, are in conformity with the Constitution.

The rulings of the Court have been received with mixed feelings. The coalition parties welcomed the lottery system in principle, as it promotes equality, whereas the Education Committee of the opposition parties declared their preference for a combination of Abitur and tests. Public opinion is reluctant to depart from the mythical belief in certification which is so characteristic of the German education system: meritocrats dislike Lady Luck. To make things worse, a conference on construction and evaluation of tests, which was held in March at the Loeccum Academy, raised many doubts as to their usefulness. It is certainly possible to test the manual dexterity of future dentists - but what about the qualities that make a good general practitioner or a successful psychologist? The spokesmen of the Professional Association of German Psychologists strongly warned against introducing tests as selection criteria.

The Conference of the Länder Education Ministers at its session in mid-March took measures to implement the rulings of the Court and in particular to elaborate the new admission procedure in accordance with the Higher Education Frame Act. The far-reaching implications of the decisions to be taken led the Conference to address itself to the Prime Ministers of the Federation and the Länder and request the creation of an ad hoc group to determine how far to expand higher education, taking into consideration the budgetary and labour market

situation. A similar appeal to the Prime Ministers had already been issued by the Federal Education Minister, Mr. ROHDE, who emphasised that decisions can no longer be postponed and complained that little progress had been made in the study reform which is a pre-requisite for a successful higher education policy.

Akademischer Dienst, 1/III ; Pressemitteilung, 15/III;
The Times Educational Supplement, 4/III/1977; v.M.

EUDISED descriptors : numerus clausus ; higher education ; access to education ; equal opportunity ; selection criterion ; Germany FR.

FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY : MORE TRAINING PLACES OFFERED - NO LEVY

At the end of March the Federal Government decided not to raise in 1977 the levy which the new Act on the promotion of training places (see News-letter 3/76) provides for. Under this Act all firms which employ apprentices and trainees and the wage bill of which exceeds 400,000 DM per year (a sum corresponding to some 20 employees) have to pay a levy of 0.25 % of their wage bill, if the total number of training places offered does not exceed by 12.5 % the demand of adolescents for such places. This levy is to be used to allocate grants to individual firms as an incentive for offering training places.

In January, the Federal Ministry of Education and Science published the first Vocational Training Report which according to the Act it has annually to submit to Parliament. The report gives a detailed account, based on a wealth of statistical data, of the situation in vocational training. It reaches the conclusion that there will be in 1977 an offer of training places totalling about 544,000 as compared to a demand of some 545,000 places. These figures came as a surprise to public opinion accustomed to gloomy reports on youth employment. There seem to have been, on the one hand, a slight recovery leading industry, crafts and commerce to seek more trainees than in 1975/76, and, on the other, a feeling of responsibility for ensuring that all school leavers find a training place. However, as the offer in 1977 would not exceed demand by the 12.5 % requested by the Act, the report proposed to raise the levy and made detailed suggestions for it.

The matter then came before the Executive Committee of the Federal Institute for Vocational Training which the Act has created to advise the Government on these matters. Here the figures of the Federal Ministry were contested. The representatives of industry, crafts and commerce were able to prove that the offer of training places would exceed the estimates of the Ministry : there would be an offer of 606-628 thousand training places and 550-557 thousand adolescents seeking training. The Government accepted these figures, and the levy was therefore not raised.

This decision has been welcomed by the employer organisations and the liberal sector of public opinion but deplored by the trade unions and the socialist sector. There remains, however, a general feeling of concern : will it be possible, also in the years to come, to provide training and work for the growing number of adolescents ? The birth-rate of the mid-sixties will reach its peak in 1982, by that time 800-820 thousands training places will be needed to meet the demand.

Akademischer Dienst, 1/II ; 22/III ;
Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 31/III/77; v.M.

EUDISED descriptors : vocational training ; apprentice ; apprenticeship ; educational provision ; Germany FR

GREECE : A COMMUNIST MAJORITY IN THE STUDENT BODIES

In early February the 90,000 students at the ten universities, technical colleges and colleges of education elected their representatives. The four communist student movements obtained the absolute majority with 58 % or 305 of the 525 seats in the student bodies. The socialist student group which adheres to the ideas of a "people's front", comprising both socialists and communists, won 18 % of the seats. The groups which support the present government of Prime Minister KARAMANLIS could not obtain more than 16.6 %.

These election results have come as a shock to public opinion. It should not be overlooked, however, that views of the students are not necessarily shared by the population as a whole. In the latest elections those of 1974, the communists could not muster more than 9.3 % of votes, whereas the party of Mr. Karamanlis won an absolute majority with 54.5 %.

The only immediate effect of the communist dominance in the student bodies will be to delay the bill which was intended to increase student participation. It is also not to be excluded that conflicts between the professorial and the student bodies may shortly arise.

Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 7/II/1977 ; M.B.

EUDISED descriptors : student movement ; student organization ; political affiliation ; political behaviour ; communism ; Greece.

IRELAND : WARNING OF A POSSIBLE LOWERING OF STANDARDS

In mid-March Mr. Peter BARRY, Minister for Education, warned that educational standards might have to be lowered if the country could not afford to provide adequate money to finance the various sectors. He said that merely to maintain the current range and level of services over the next five years would require an average increase of 5 % per annum, plus an allowance to cover inflation. Without adequate financial support the country would be faced with the "unpleasant and undesirable necessity" of a drop in educational standards.

The Minister's warning provoked a flurry of comments. It was pointed out that this year's mere 12 % increase in the education budget already constituted a virtual cut-back on account of the higher figure of inflation and the rapidly growing school population. Financing the nation's educational needs over the next decade, with over 40 % of the population under 21 years of age, must be one of the major tasks facing future governments. Some commentators praised Mr. Barry for seeking to inform the public in an objective and rational manner of the facts, however unpalatable. They felt that his remarks would serve to concentrate thinking in educational circles. Others saw in his warning an attempt to prepare the public for an effective lowering in standards, and a confirmation of the lack of political will to make the necessary appraisal and commitment in relation to education.

It is feared that education will be an easy target for the Department of Finance, despite the argument that because the nation is poorer in material goods than most western European countries, it should be spending more of the gross national product on education for the

purpose of promoting economic growth. With at present 75 % of the education budget taken up by salaries, there appears little room for manoeuvre, but the Minister has been urged to say how demands such as those for an expansion in remedial education, reduced class sizes, a new deal for disadvantaged areas, as well as the financing of secondary schools, are going to fare in the light of his speech. It is not enough, critics maintain, giving the financial facts that will put various demands into perspective, when the merits of certain demands are such that they must be implemented.

The Irish Press, 15/III/1977 ; W.F.B.

EUDISED descriptors : economics of education ; financial resources ; financing ; Ireland.

IRELAND : CLOSURE OF SMALLER SCHOOLS TO BE ENDED

The Minister for Education, Mr. Peter BARRY, has announced the ending of the policy of closing one- and two-teacher schools. Mr. Barry said that the educational arguments in support of such closures had not been proven. Furthermore, the economic arguments were now less pertinent, especially since the oil crisis had adversely affected the cost of the free school transport system, extension of such a system being an inevitable consequence of a policy of regrouping schools. Above all, said Mr. Barry, he was persuaded of the value of local schools in maintaining the social fabric of local communities. "I am convinced of the wisdom of keeping children as near to the influence of the home environment as possible". He was of the opinion that it was not the building or the size of the school which was important - it was the teacher and the quality of the teaching.

The policy of closing one- and two-teacher schools and amalgamating them with larger units was introduced early in 1966. At that time the total number of primary schools of all sizes was 4,847, of which 3,147 were one- or two-teacher schools. Since the introduction of this policy approximately 1,770 such schools have been closed (i.e. more than half). The Minister said that while the Department of Education would no longer "force" closures, this did not rule out the possibility of future closures where "common sense dictated such actions, and where the local community concerned agreed with these measures". There was no question of reversing decisions already taken. Schools that had been closed would not be reopened.

The Minister said that while there would be no further addition to the cost of providing free school transport, the policy of maintaining small schools would nevertheless mean that the overall cost to the State would go up, especially as repair and improvement grants to such schools would be resumed.

The Irish Press, 8/II/1977; W.F.B.

EUDISED descriptors : rural school ; class size ; school transport ; school distribution ; Ireland.

ITALIE : REFORME DE L'ECOLE SECONDAIRE SUPERIEURE ET ENSEIGNEMENT PROFESSIONNEL

Fin mars, le ministre de l'Instruction Publique, M. MALFATTI, a déposé à la Chambre des députés un projet de réforme pour une nouvelle école secondaire unitaire du second cycle, projet adopté par le Conseil des ministres en janvier 1977. Un autre texte, approuvé lui aussi par le gouvernement et qui sera prochainement soumis au parlement, concerne une loi-cadre relative à l'enseignement professionnel.

L'école secondaire supérieure

Elle est ouverte aux élèves titulaires de la "licenza media" (diplôme de fin d'études de l'école moyenne), et la durée des études est de cinq ans. Les différents types d'établissements secondaires supérieurs (lycées, établissements d'enseignement technique, professionnel, artistique, écoles normales) disparaîtront et seront remplacés par une école unitaire.

Chaque élève pourra choisir son curriculum, son plan d'études. Les programmes s'articuleront en un tronc commun d'études et en filières spécialisées. La première année sera consacrée à l'approfondissement des matières étudiées au cours de la scolarité obligatoire et à l'orientation. Dès cette première année, les élèves, garçons et filles, seront appelés à exercer des activités manuelles. C'est là un premier pas qui témoigne de la volonté de dépasser la séparation traditionnelle entre travail manuel et travail intellectuel. Le programme comprendra des matières communes, obligatoires pour tous, des matières optionnelles parmi lesquelles l'élève devra obligatoirement choisir, et des matières facultatives dont le choix sera libre et non-obligatoire.

Le tronc commun comportera des enseignements dans les quatre domaines suivants :

- linguistique et littéraire ;
- historique, social, philosophique, humaniste, juridique, économique ;
- scientifique, technologique (sciences naturelles, physiques, mathématiques, technologie) ;
- artistique.

Selon le domaine choisi parmi les quatre proposés, tel élève étudiera plus intensément les mathématiques, tel autre davantage le latin ou tel autre une langue étrangère supplémentaire.

De la 2ème à la 5ème année, les heures consacrées aux matières communes diminueront progressivement au profit de matières plus spécifiques. Une fois leur domaine choisi, les élèves ne pourront plus en changer. C'est donc là un choix décisif. Mais à l'intérieur même de chaque domaine, les élèves pourront faire une sélection parmi un certain nombre de filières (12 au maximum seront proposées). La filière choisie conduira à un type de "maturità" (baccalauréat) personnalisé. On pourra éventuellement changer de filière, mais cela nécessitera alors une préparation préalable. Toutes les écoles, cependant, n'offriront pas nécessairement tous les domaines ni toutes les filières, mais l'ensemble de toutes les filières sera regroupé dans les limites du district. Chaque province offrira, au moins, une section artistique.

A la fin du secondaire supérieur (5e année), les élèves passeront l'examen de la "maturità" (trois épreuves écrites et une épreuve orale portant sur toutes les matières étudiées au cours de la dernière année). Le projet prévoit la suppression des examens de rattrapage. Sur le diplôme figurera le type de la filière suivie. La "maturità" ne permettrait plus - comme c'est le cas actuellement - d'entrer

dans n'importe quelle faculté. Pour continuer ses études, l'élève aura deux possibilités :

- soit l'entrée immédiate à un cours de "laurea" (licence), mais si celui-ci ne correspond pas à la filière suivie jusque-là, les élèves devront suivre à l'université un cours préparatoire et, après avoir passé un examen, ils pourront entrer dans la faculté souhaitée ;
- soit une activité professionnelle : les élèves s'inscriront dans ce but dans une des futures écoles préparant au diplôme professionnel postsecondaire (1 ou 2 années d'études, avec possibilité d'accès ultérieur en 2ème année à des cours de "laurea" correspondant à la spécialité choisie). Ces écoles seront spécialisées en comptabilité, géodésie, électronique, technologie dentaire et médicale, et mécanique agricole.

L'enseignement professionnel

Le texte concernant l'enseignement professionnel qui n'a pas encore été déposé à la Chambre des députés, tient compte du fait que la Constitution (art. 117) confie aux régions la responsabilité de "l'instruction artisanale et professionnelle", en proposant une loi-cadre dont les détails seront à régler par les régions. Le projet prévoit la création de différents cours :

- cours préparatoires de courte durée afin de faciliter, grâce à une information socio-économique, le choix du métier par ceux qui ont des difficultés à s'intégrer dans le marché de l'emploi ;
- cours initiaux de qualification professionnelle à l'intention de ceux qui ont terminé la scolarité obligatoire et qui sont âgés de 15 ans révolus ;
- cours de perfectionnement pour niveaux professionnels intermédiaires ;
- cours de spécialisation, dits de perfectionnement, pour les travailleurs ;
- cours de reconversion professionnelle (recyclage) destinés à faciliter la mobilité de la main-d'oeuvre ;
- cours destinés aux invalides et aux handicapés psycho-moteur ;
- cours d'artisanat.

Tous ces cours relèveront de la compétence des régions. Celles-ci pourront également autoriser des organismes privés - y inclus des syndicats - à les organiser sous leur égide.

Les régions cependant n'auront pas compétence pour les cours prévus par la réforme de l'école secondaire supérieure : il s'agit des cours biennaux de préparation professionnelle ouverts aux titulaires de la "maturité". Ces cours sont dispensés aujourd'hui dans les établissements techniques et les écoles normales. Pris en charge par l'Etat, ils ont suscité le mécontentement des jeunes lors des récentes manifestations : ces cours apparaissent en effet comme un allongement de l'école secondaire supérieure pour ceux qui n'ont pas l'intention de s'inscrire à l'université. On peut se demander en effet s'ils n'ont pas encouragé des inscriptions plus massives dans les facultés. Le projet du gouvernement se propose d'y remédier : avec la "maturité" on ne pourra accéder qu'aux facultés compatibles avec la filière choisie dans le secondaire, à moins de suivre à l'université un cours préparatoire permettant l'accès à la faculté initialement non-compatible.

Le débat parlementaire devra trouver un point de convergence entre cette réforme et les propositions des autres partis (cf. News-letter/ Faits Nouveaux 3/75). Il est peu probable que le texte de M. Malfatti soit adopté sans modification. Les divergences sont nombreuses, et la réforme n'entrera en vigueur, sauf imprévu, que le 1er octobre 1979. Elle ne concernera pas les élèves qui, à cette date, seront déjà dans le secondaire supérieur tel qu'il est organisé aujourd'hui.

Corriere della Sera, 21/23/III/1977 ; D.P.

Descripteurs EUDISED : secondaire deuxième cycle ; durée des études ; travail manuel ; réforme ; accès à l'éducation ; programme d'études ; enseignement professionnel ; Italie.

ITALIE : LA REVOLTE DU DESESPoir

En 1968, les revendications des étudiants étaient d'ordre idéologique. Leur élan révolutionnaire reposait sur un enthousiasme généreux. En 1977, il en va tout autrement. Tout d'abord les motivations des étudiants ont changé radicalement. Les étudiants réclament du travail pour les diplômés, un pré-salaire, des logements et une revalorisation général des diplômes. Ensuite le nombre d'étudiants - presque un million - fait désormais le poids. Ce nombre pléthorique est le résultat des slogans démagogiques lancés par les partis de gauche : "l'université pour tous ... plus de sélection réactionnaire, plus d'examens vexatoires". Ces slogans ont été sanctionnés par la législation de 1969 qui a ouvert la porte de l'université à tout élève issu des écoles secondaires, même professionnelles ou techniques. En huit ans de cette politique le nombre des étudiants a triplé, les universités du pays ont été engorgées, les diplômes ont été dévalués et le désordre règne partout.

Ce brusque accroissement du nombre d'étudiants est allé de pair avec une démocratisation radicale. Le pourcentage de jeunes d'origine sociale modeste a fortement augmenté. Les "fils à papa" sont désormais en minorité. Les bourses étant rares et insuffisantes, les ressources familiales limitées, les étudiants fréquentent peu les cours et exercent de petits métiers. Le diplôme ne leur servira du reste qu'à aller grossir la foule des diplômés à la recherche du premier emploi : 300.000 pour l'instant en Italie.

Il y a des années qu'une réforme aurait dû être mise en oeuvre à l'université. A la démagogie de la gauche répondait l'inertie de la classe dirigeante : la responsabilité de la paralysie est largement partagée.

On se trouve actuellement en présence d'une périlleuse coupure en deux du pays : ceux qui ont du travail et le défendent jalousement, avec l'aide des syndicats ; ceux qui n'en ont pas et sont rejetés - les marginaux, les violents. Tous les partis, les communistes en premier, entendent éviter à tout prix ce prélude à un état insurrectionnel.

La violence des étudiants et "des casseurs armés" qui leur ont prêté main-forte, a stupéfié les amis d'Enrico Berlinguer. Il pouvait donc se produire de pareilles explosions sans l'accord des communistes ? Voilà qui était rigoureusement inédit. Le parti communiste déteste se trouver ainsi pris au dépourvu. Surtout que parallèlement à ce puissant mouvement de marginaux s'amplifie un terrorisme politique qui, par le désarroi qu'il provoque, bat en brèche lui aussi, son pouvoir de "parti de l'ordre". Ce pouvoir est d'ores et déjà considérable. Le P.C.I. contrôle en effet par son soutien indirect, le gouvernement

et par ses "juntas" de gauche toutes les grandes villes et la plupart des régions. La défense de ce pouvoir implique de casser ou de récupérer le mouvement étudiant, et de neutraliser le terrorisme politique.

Le Soir, 9/IV/1977; B.M.

Descripteurs EUDISED : contestation étudiante ; organisation étudiante ; mouvement étudiant ; chômage , emploi des jeunes ; études universitaires ; Italie.

ITALY : UNIVERSITY REFORM AGAIN ON THE AGENDA

The Education Minister, Mr. Malfatti, announced at the end of March that the government will shortly submit to Parliament the University Reform Bill which is to follow up the secondary school reform. The Bill's objectives are to regenerate and democratise the university and, at the same time, to limit student numbers. The main features of the Bill are :

- degrees will be at three levels : a diploma after two years of study ; the laurea, a bachelor's degree, after 3-4 years ; and the research doctorate, a PhD, for which candidates will receive a scholarship. Within a two-year period after enactment new study courses and degrees will be created which are to be more in line with the demands of society;
- faculties will be replaced by autonomous departments ; this reorganisation will be introduced in an experimental way and finalised in the light of experience gained ;
- the teaching staff will be reorganised to comprise only two categories ;
- a national university council will be created which will be chaired by the Education Minister. It will comprise representatives of university teachers, students and local authorities. Its task will be to advise the government on university planning and policy.

The announcement of the government's reform bill was preceded by the news about a new blueprint for university reform elaborated by the Communist Party. This blueprint attempts to combine complete freedom of teaching and research with intense involvement of public authorities, trade unions and, to a lesser extent, employers, in university government.

The Communists draft reform bill sees the universities as collaborating in the economic, social and cultural development of the country in addition to promoting higher education and scientific research. The importance attached to the former aspect is reflected in the proposals for the composition of the main governing organs which are to ensure the political integration of the university. These organs are the national university council which would decide overall policy and the distribution of research funds, the regional university councils and the councils of the individual universities and their departments.

About one-third of the 97-man national university council would be made up of non-university members, six would be representatives of the unions, three of employers' federations and another three appointed by the national research council. The rest would represent regional governments ; of the 64 university representatives 24 would represent students, assistants and non-teaching staff. The professors' representatives would therefore be in a minority on the council.

The presence of the local authorities would be even stronger on the regional councils whose task would be to co-ordinate the teaching and scientific policies of the universities and the aims of social, cultural and economic development in the region as laid down in regional planning. The regional councils are also supposed to set up scientific and research structures to deal with matters of interest to the region.

Even on the individual universities' councils, the main governing bodies, professors would be in a minority among their 35 members. These councils would be composed of 16 professors, five students' representatives, three non-teaching staff, three members designated by the regional government, three by the town where the university is situated, one appointed by the research council and one by a future high council for science and technology. The remaining three would be appointed by the Education Minister.

A fourth decision-making body would be the department council - the one-chair faculty system having been abolished. All the teaching staff would be members and representatives of students and non-teaching staff would be included. This body would be the only one on which the professors would have a majority. It would govern and co-ordinate teaching and research activities and appoint new staff.

These proposals are bound to be highly unpopular with many professors, as this would involve a certain control of their activities. Often a chair serves largely to lend lustre to far more lucrative activities in the outside world. Present professors who wish to continue part-time would be able to do so for no more than seven years and at a considerable reduction in their salaries.

The bill, presented by the Communist Party, also foresees some system of keeping track of student attendance at lectures. At present, a large proportion of students rarely, if ever, attend lectures, often because they are unbearably crowded. The Communists believe that introducing numerous clausus would not be the best way of solving the overcrowding problem, except in faculties such as medicine and education, where the country's future needs could be fairly reliably calculated.

The Times Higher Education Supplement, 11/II;
Le Monde, 30/III/1977 ; B.M.

EJDISED descriptors : participation ; university ; reform ; academic degree ; administrative structure ; Italy.

NETHERLANDS : OPEN UNIVERSITY PROPOSED

In mid-February the Commission for Developing Higher Education and the Open School Commission presented a joint report to the Minister of Education in which they recommended that a system of open higher education be introduced. The Ministry immediately set up a preparatory committee, under the chairmanship of Professor DE MOOR, to decide among other things on necessary legislation and initial programmes with a view to starting the open system in 1979.

The speed with which the Ministry reacted to the report can be explained by the fact that it is anticipated that demand for higher education will continue to grow, in particular amongst social groups which have in the past made only limited demands on the higher education service. It is felt that an open university would meet adequately

the needs of such groups, at the same time avoiding the need to expand existing higher existing facilities and providing a relatively cheap service. As major potential users of an open university system, the report identified adults already in employment and housewives.

In preparing their report, the commissions examined the Swedish, American and British open learning models and put forward three suggestions in this respect. The first one is a decentralized model whereby the universities and higher vocational institutes share the entire responsibility of running an open system of higher education. The second would give higher education institutions part responsibility for, say, tutoring and examinations, but then have a central organization, the Open University itself, responsible for the syllabuses. The report favours neither of these models, the first being deemed unnecessarily unwieldy, the second being likely to reinforce the existing binary situation which is due to be phased out. The report comes down in favour of a completely independent open university model, autonomous of higher education institutions but which would make use of existing educational provisions, such as teaching centres and laboratories.

The report envisages a multi-media approach to teaching, use being made of written work, radio, television, tape recordings, and group and individual counselling. Entry to courses would, in principle, be unrestricted. It is not the government's intention, however, to offer study grants. The preparatory committee is expected to consider whether it may be advisable to institute age limits, and to introduce a trial period to see whether a student is able to follow adequately the course chosen.

The open university programmes would be split into separate but inter-related parts, each part lasting not longer than one year. This would give students greater flexibility in planning their courses of study, it being possible to follow just one part of a course at a time. Studies could be interrupted and picked up again at a later date, if personal circumstances so demanded. Final qualifications would have the same value as those dispensed by the traditional institutions.

The Ministry of Education has made it clear that there is no intention to cut back on the present system of part-time studies (some 33 % of students taking higher level vocational courses are doing so on a part-time basis, as are 10 % of other higher level students). The open university would rather complement the existing system.

The Times Higher Education Supplement, 11/III/1977 ;
Uitleg, 498 ; Schoolblad, 12/24/III/1977 ; N.K.W.F.B.

EUDISED descriptors : higher education ; part-time ; access to education ; innovation ; adult education ; university ; Netherlands.

NETHERLANDS : REDUCTION IN FUNDS FOR UNIVERSITIES

Despite fierce protests from university circles, parliament has adopted this year's university budget proposals which aim to make a sharp cut in spending. Particularly affected by the cuts will be capital investment, personnel costs, running costs and research.

Specific steps will be taken to tighten up university salaries. These include a lower starting scale for young lecturers, and no automatic salary promotion for professors to the highest pay bracket. There will also be closer control as regards promotion and the grading of posts. Vacant chairs, for example, will first be re-evaluated for their "worthiness", before being refilled. The pensionable age for professors and lecturers will be lowered from 70 to 65.

An extra 415 posts are to be created this year, but any further staff expansion has been postponed until at least 1983.

The feeling within university circles is that such constraints will place in jeopardy the new four-year courses planned for 1978, as well as making it even more difficult to cope with the rapidly increasing demand for university places. Even so, the universities still have a 27 % share of the educational funds, placing them second (after secondary education) on the priorities list.

The Times Higher Educational Supplement, 4/III/77; W.F.B.

EUDISED descriptors : university ; financial resources ; budget ; Netherlands

SWEDEN : MODIFICATIONS TO THE REFORM OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Mr. Jan-Erik WIKSTROM, Minister of Education, presented a bill to parliament at the end of February with the object of bringing the reform of higher education, adopted by parliament in 1975, into line with the thinking of the present government. The reform adopted in 1975 was based to a large extent on the proposals of the U68 committee (cf. News-letter 1/75 and 2/75) and was described in some quarters at the time as "the reform of the century". The reform had indeed been the fruit of nine years of investigations, hearings and the like.

The government bill on training and research in colleges (högskola) limits numerus clausus to those courses already subject to such a restriction. There will be no extension of the numerus clausus system. Should demand for places be greater than foreseen, then the State will increase its grant.

It is the government's policy to promote recurrent education. The Minister is hopeful that by facilitating an alternation between work and study higher education will become accessible to a broader social range than hitherto. He is of the opinion that it would be useful for young people to gain some experience of working life before taking up higher education studies.

As regards administrative structure, the country will be divided into six areas, as was decided in 1975. Each area will have its own governing board on which there will be a majority of laymen. This aspect of the reform revealed certain divergences of opinion amongst the governing coalition. The areas will be further subdivided into units bringing together the higher education institutions of a given locality. Each unit will be governed by a board where students and teachers will have a majority, the Minister's view being that those who are concerned by decisions should also participate in taking them.

The government has reaffirmed the 1975 decision that higher education should be more vocationally oriented. The general study lines will be divided into five principal sectors, depending on the professions to which they lead, namely : technology; administration, economics and social work; medicine; teaching; cultural work and information. These general study lines will be common to the whole country, but each higher education unit can also arrange a line of study to meet local needs. There will be short courses for students seeking only limited

training, and it will be possible for individual students to compose their own pattern of studies to meet individual needs.

Svenska Dagbladet, 12/II/1977 ; B.B.P., W.F.B.

EUDISED descriptors : higher education ; vocational training ;
numerus clausus ; recurrent education ; administrative structure ;
Sweden.

SWEDEN : INNOVATIONS IN THE TRAINING OF TEACHERS FOR PRE-SCHOOL
AND MIGRANT CHILDREN

In a bill presented to parliament in March, the government proposes certain changes in the training of teachers for pre-school establishments as well as the introduction of a new programme for teachers specializing in the native languages of migrant children.

At present, those wishing to train as pre-school teachers can apply on completion of the comprehensive school course. As from 1980/81 the same admissions criteria will apply as for the rest of higher education courses, that is the applicant must have completed at least a two-year line of study at upper secondary level or have a knowledge of Swedish and English equivalent to that reached after two years at upper secondary school. For those who are at least 25 years of age and who have four years of work experience only the corresponding knowledge of English will be demanded. For those who have followed child/youth care courses at upper secondary level, the training period will be of four terms, whereas the training of those who have not followed such courses will be of five terms, the first being devoted to practical studies.

Qualified teachers wishing to become specialists in pre-school methodology may follow a 20-week course. To be admitted to such a course, applicants must in addition to basic training, have completed four years of professional practice.

The bill points out that in the training of pre-school teachers the giving of marks or grades is not particularly relevant and can, in fact, have a negative effect on training methods. Instead, it is proposed that certificates granted to students should give more detailed information of achievements and training followed. It is, however, for the Office of Universities and Colleges in accord with the National Board of Education to decide on this aspect.

The bill also provides for the setting up, as from the 1977/78 academic year, of courses for future teachers of the native languages of migrant children. The courses, which will be able to cater for 120 students per year, will be based in Stockholm, Göteborg and Malmö and will in the coming year cover Finnish, Serbo-Croatian, Greek, Turkish and Danish. As well as language training the courses will give information concerning the social scene. The bill stresses in particular this social element. Within a framework of basic training, students can specialize in teaching at various levels, for example pre-school, lower or middle levels of the comprehensive school, upper secondary.

Access to this training will be the same as for other higher education courses except that the normally required standard in English will not be demanded.

Ministry of Education press release 24/III/77; B.B.P., W.F.B.

EUDISED descriptors : teacher education ; pre-school education ;
migrant ; mother tongue ; language teaching ; Sweden.

UNITED KINGDOM : REGIONAL CONFERENCES ON EDUCATIONAL ISSUES

The Department of Education and Science (DES) has responded to the Prime Minister's call for public discussion on educational matters (cf. News-Letter 5/76) by organising a series of eight regional conferences for the months of February and March.

Following discussions between the Secretary of State for Education and Science, Mrs. Shirley WILLIAMS, and various organisations, four main topics were chosen for debate : the school curriculum 5-16, the assessment of standards of performance in schools, the education and training of teachers, school and working life. To provide background information for the regional conferences, the DES produced a paper "Educating our children", which although not being an expression of government policy or priorities can be taken as a guide to official thinking.

The school curriculum 5 - 16

In addition to developing basic skills, says the paper, the curriculum should enable children as part of their essential general education to understand the rapidly changing society of which they are part, including the economics of everyday life and the role of industry and commerce in sustaining the standard of living.

Current criticisms stem from four main anxieties - anxiety about the unacceptable differences from school to school in the content and quality of children's learning ; about the over-crowding of the curriculum in response to constantly expanding demands ; anxiety that not enough young people are equipped with basic skills, and also with a knowledge and understanding of our economy ; and fears that in an increasingly mobile society different teaching approaches and methods can lead to a break in a child's learning because he has moved from one area to another.

There has been a good deal of debate about the need for a common curriculum or at least for a common core to the curriculum, but, says the paper, describing a common core or even a common curriculum solely by subject names, will probably not help. Familiar names conceal wide differences : secondary school science, for instance, may describe general science, physics, chemistry, biology, engineering, health science, rural science or physiology. It might be more useful first to consider what schools actually do and consider what is taught not only in relation to subject names but in more general terms, asking what educational needs are being met.

The assessment of standards

This section of the paper looks at the various ways of assessing standards of performance of pupils in schools. It also looks at three approaches for assessing performance - systematic individual assessment and observation ; public examinations ; and assessment by sampling. At present, most assessments are made by teachers in the normal course of their work including the setting of objective tests. Assessments are also made by heads, Her Majesty's inspectors and local inspectors and advisers.

The paper says that there is little quantitative national evidence of decisive trends in educational standards and points out that external forms of assessment are necessary so that results can be made available to teachers and sometimes, in a general form, to the public.

The education and training of teachers

Whatever decisions are taken about what should be done in schools, and however many interests including parents, industry and the general

community must properly be consulted, it falls to the teachers to translate those decisions into classroom practice and successful learning, and their professional skills will therefore be a crucial factor. It is essential therefore, says the paper, to keep in mind the criteria by which these professional skills are tested, and among them are :

- Does the teacher fully understand the value and significance of what he teaches and how it contributes to the sum of a full education ?
- Does he know how best to use the resources available, given a particular environment ?
- Can he relate to his pupils in such a way as to give each, as far as possible, opportunities for success, a sense of confidence, and positive attitudes ?
- Does he know how to muster the available kinds of support for a pupil whose difficulties call for resources beyond what a teacher alone can hope to supply ?
- Has he the knowledge and skills necessary for continuing assessment of pupils' performance and an appreciation of the standards they should be expected to reach ?

In carrying out their task, and particularly with regard to changing requirements, teachers must have all possible support. They and those who provide for their training and education must co-operate closely in a continuing search to match provision to needs.

School and working life

Critics of the education system complain that many pupils leave school ill-equipped to take any job because they lack skill in basic arithmetic and have poor command of English for either written or spoken communication ; that many have a negative attitude to work ; that the school system is geared to promote the importance of academic learning and pupils become prejudiced against work in productive trade and industry ; that teachers lack knowledge and understanding of trade and industry ; and that the curricula are not related to the realities of most pupils' work after leaving school.

The paper says that criticisms are also directed at industry. Employers often lay down standards of attainment for school leavers well beyond what the job requires ; they have not adapted to the effects of educational change over the last 20 years and have not made allowances for the fact that they are selecting from a group of school leavers which is more highly creamed by higher and further education than it would have been two decades ago.

It is seldom the practice of schools to offer vocational courses which are a preparation for specific occupations, and it seems to be generally, if not universally, accepted that this is the job not of schools, but of further education establishments and of industrial training arrangements. Nevertheless, good results have been noted in schools from vocationally-oriented studies, and the question arises whether for some pupils, at least, learning even in the "basic skills" may be more willing and successful if it is related to studies and activities which are practical and obviously relevant to working life.

Employers and trade unions can make a significant contribution to programmes of careers work by offering opportunities for work experience and work observation, and by encouraging representatives of both management and shop-floor to visit schools to talk to and work with pupils, says the paper.

Introducing "Educating our children", Mrs. Williams said that the regional conferences would provide an opportunity for the DES to join in an exchange of views with parents, teachers, local authorities, future employers, trade unions and others who had a particular contribution to make at regional and local level. She hoped that the conferences would be the first step towards strengthening the links between all those who cared about the education of the nation's children and those who had something positive to contribute to this task which was vital to the future of the nation. The Secretary of State indicated that following the conferences the DES hoped to produce a document as a basis for further discussion at national level.

The regional conferences have, however, been viewed with a certain scepticism in some quarters, where they are seen as a smokescreen to divert attention from the real issue which it is claimed is the provision of resources for the education service. Others take the line that the conferences can only be another long-winded affair of educational voices reading set speeches from entrenched positions, listened to by a government which has already decided on what it plans to do in schools. Yet, public relations exercise or not, the great debate is a startling departure from the traditional approach of the DES, which has been under attack of late for its lack of openness.

Press releases, 9 & 18/II/1977 ;

The Times Higher Education Supplement, 18/II/77; W.F.B.

EUDISED descriptors : curriculum ; aims of education ; assessment ; teacher education ; transition from school to work ; vocational education ; United Kingdom.

UNITED KINGDOM : STRUCTURE OF THE SCHOOLS COUNCIL UNDER REVIEW

The Secretary of State for Education, Mrs. Shirley WILLIAMS, has proposed drastic changes to the Schools Council*, including an end to its domination by teacher unions, the creation of smaller committees and far greater influence for the Department of Education and Science (DES).

In a paper sent in January to the chairman of the Schools Council, Sir Alexander SMITH, Mrs. Williams said the need for participation by wider public interests on a smaller Council meant the principle of a teacher majority on all the Council's committees should be reconsidered. "The governing council would benefit from the inclusion of a significant number of members selected not as representatives of interested bodies but appointed by virtue of their individual qualities and experience by the Secretary of State on a personal basis," she maintained. Once appointed, they would, of course, serve as independent members, not as representatives of the Secretary of State.

* The Schools Council for Curriculum and Examinations came into being in 1964, and in 1970 became an independent body financed in equal parts by the Department of Education and Science and by the local education authorities. The object of the Schools Council is the promotion of education by carrying out research into and keeping under review the curricula, teaching methods and examinations in schools, including the organisation of schools as far as it affects curricula.

Mr. Williams also wants far more say for the DES in the Council's policies, in the field of both curriculum development and examinations. The paper says : "There would be a great advantage, when undertaking lengthy and expensive studies, for the Council to secure a parallel and increasing degree of assurance that its eventual recommendations are likely to be acceptable to the Secretary of State. These considerations suggest the desirability of bringing the Secretary of State's views to bear more effectively at the formative stages of the Council's work, by securing closer engagement of the Department and the inspectorate in the preparation of proposals and their consideration by its committees".

The paper goes on to say that the Schools Council's present mode of operation leaves it with virtually complete freedom to deploy its resources as it wishes. The Secretary of State would like to see in future a greater degree of direct consultation between the Council, herself and local authorities about broad priorities for the Council's programme of work. "The present arrangements for representation of the Secretary of State within the Council are unsatisfactory", the paper continues. "The original concept whereby her nominees sit as equal partners with other member interests demonstrably does not reflect the Secretary of State's overall responsibility for the education service".

Even before receiving the Secretary of State's paper, the Schools Council had, in fact, set in motion a review of its constitution. Doubtless this was prompted by criticisms of the Schools Council aired at the time of the Prime Minister's speech on education in October 1976 (cf. News-Letter 5/76). At the time, Sir Alexander Smith in a letter to the Prime Minister said that he wished that, if the DES felt such criticisms, it had had the courage to express them directly to the governing council where the Secretary of State has three representatives.

Whilst it is generally recognized in educational circles that the role of the Schools Council should be re-examined, the approach adopted by the Secretary of State is not to the liking of all. The aggressive tone of her paper, it has been said, is out of keeping with the traditional manner of proceeding. Nor have educational circles taken kindly to the apparent suggestion that a body set up to advise the Secretary of State must, before it starts work, find out what advice the Secretary of State wants and then restrict itself to finding evidence to support the desired point of view. Some have detected an attempt to strengthen the role of central government in education. Any such policy would arouse considerable opposition in that within the English context the principle of decentralization is a guarantee of freedom and diversity.

The Times Educational Supplement, 21&28/I/1977;W.F.B.

EUDISED descriptors : participation ; decision making ; educational policy ; role ; minister of education ; United Kingdom.

UNITED KINGDOM : MODERN LANGUAGES IN COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOLS

The learning of modern foreign languages in schools could be significantly improved, if a more rational distribution of opportunities and some agreement about the length and purpose of language courses could be achieved, says a report ("Modern languages in comprehensive schools") prepared by Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI) and published by the Department of Education and Science in March.

The HMI survey of the learning and teaching of modern foreign languages was carried out in the 1975-76 school year at a time when there was rapidly growing concern about the future of language learning in schools. Eighty-three single sex and co-educational comprehensive schools (about one in ten) in 40 local education authority areas were visited. They represented eight different age ranges - from 9-13 middle schools to sixth form colleges - in urban, semi-urban and rural areas, and were of varying sizes. The survey was confined to the teaching and learning of French, German, Italian, Russian and Spanish. Inspectors also visited a further 19 schools thought to have particularly interesting features. The report points out that although comprehensive schools were the focus of attention it was clear that some of the problems identified would also have been found in selective schools.

"One of the most striking features of the survey", says the report, was the haphazard and infinitely varied provision for language learning encountered as one moved from school to school. With the present mobility of population it is highly desirable that there should be less diversity of provision so that administrators, heads, teachers, parents and pupils are enabled to make certain basic assumptions about the opportunities that pupils will be offered." At present too many pupils - particularly boys - gave up language study prematurely in the middle of a course, and it was of paramount importance that boys and girls capable of benefiting from an appropriate course should be identified at an early stage.

In all but a few of the schools visited, language learning was characterized by some or all of the following features: the underperformance in all four language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) of the abler pupils; the setting of impossible and pointless tasks for average and in particular less able pupils and their abandonment of modern language learning at the first opportunity; excessive use of English and an inability to produce other than inadequate or largely unusable statements in the modern language; an inefficient reading skill; and writing limited mainly to mechanical reproduction which was often extremely inaccurate. Where pupils were conscious of making real progress, they usually displayed their enthusiasm in the classroom and tended to continue their language studies at the option stage. "In contrast, in all too many language classes there was an atmosphere of boredom, disenchantment and restlessness", says the report.

Describing the practices used in a number of schools in various parts of the country where a measure of success was being achieved, the report says that they all had certain features in common. The teachers had clear expectations of their pupils and were determined that they should achieve what was expected of them. They had given thought to the needs of pupils of differing abilities and the standard of teaching was high. Quality of staffing was clearly a major factor influencing the quality of modern language learning, says the report. The 83 schools visited had 471 modern language teachers, but by no means all of them devoted the whole of their time to the subject. There was difficulty in recruiting language teachers. In the schools covered by the survey 17 per cent of heads of department were under 31 years of age; 39 per cent were 31-40 and 44 per cent 41-65. Almost half the teachers were trained graduates with a degree in a modern foreign language, and a further 12 per cent were language graduates without professional training. Language qualifications varied significantly from one category of school to another. Many teachers gave evidence of a need for continuing in-service support, and the inspectors felt that in nearly half the schools a majority of the staff were in serious difficulties in the endeavours to ensure that their pupils worked at a satisfactory level.

According to the report "the picture to emerge is of a body of teachers - the majority well qualified - who are facing considerable problems in their day-to-day work. Support is available from a number of sources but the less experienced do not always receive the leadership or help which they need".

While most children studied a modern language at 11 and 12, there was no agreement, says the report, on what proportion of a school population should do so. Within the sample it was found that 89 per cent of 11-year-olds and 85 per cent of 12-year-olds were attending language classes. In the third year it was 80 per cent, and for pupils aged 14 and 15 when the foreign language became optional the figures dropped to 35 per cent and 33 per cent respectively.

"There is no doubt that a reasonable allocation of time is essential for successful language learning", the report points out. "Though the daily lesson, once traditional, may be hard to fit into a crowded curriculum, it is generally considered by modern language teachers that the minimum time-allocation should be four lessons of 40 minutes every week. On this criterion only half the groups in the first and fourth years in secondary schools were allowed sufficient time, and only about 60 per cent of those in the fifth year. The second and third years were even less generously provided for; in the third year fewer than 40 per cent had adequate provision".

In general, modern language departments were reasonably well equipped, but it appeared that in about half of the schools very limited use was being made of the equipment available. Inadequate technical servicing may have been a contributory factor in some instances, and in a few schools where equipment was in short supply the cause was usually lack of demand from teachers rather than any failure by local education authorities to meet stated needs. While the great majority of schools were well stocked, one school in eight was short of textbooks for certain age groups or ability ranges.

Describing the different practices adopted in various schools for teaching foreign languages other than French, the report states that these languages frequently appeared in the school curriculum as options with the advantages and disadvantages that this implies. Staffing problems and the policy of a common curriculum for all pupils appeared, either singly or in combination, to limit the introduction of a second modern language in lower-tier schools where transfer took place at 13 or 14.

The report describes the good practices found in schools and gives details of the methods adopted. In these schools detailed schemes of work had been produced, financial help given by the local education authority, considerable use made of home-made as well as commercial materials, high standards of teaching were reflected in the quality of the pupils' work, and some schools took an active part in town-twinning arrangements.

The inspectors conclude that it was classroom practice and relationships which above all determined success or failure. "Much of the under performance revealed in this report", they say, "results from a tacit assumption that all pupils studying a modern language have basically the same needs. It is abundantly clear, however, that such an assumption is not only false but has unfortunate, often distressing, consequences for many pupils".

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